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BROCKTON CELEBRATES ARBOR DAY AT ASHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

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The scent of freshly turned earth and new mulch hung heavy in the air as Mayor Linda Balzotti kicked off Brockton's Arbor Day celebration April 30th at the Ashfield Middle School. Her Honor presented the Arbor Day flag to Principal Barbara Lovell and commended students for their eco-friendly studies.

"Thank you for taking pride in your school," Balzotti told a crowd of students and staff. "Your respect for nature and the earth are an important lesson to us all."

Brockton has earned the designation of a Tree City USA for the past 12 years from the National Arbor Day Foundation, said Pam Gurley of the city's Planning Department. The designation is won by communities that demonstrate a commitment to planting trees and shrubs as a way of maintaining a healthy environment.



Mayor Balzotti promised the students and assembled guests that under her administration Brockton's annual Arbor Day celebrations will always be held at schools, so that the message of Arbor Day is planted anew.

The Coe Road middle school was given two kousa dogwood trees, which will grow to 20 feet and bear brilliant white blooms, Gurley said.

In honor of Arbor Day, Principal Lovell and her staff designated the entire day an "Ashfield Pride Day," and students and staff took shifts throughout the morning and afternoon raking, weeding, spreading mulch and planting perennials. The students also cleaned up brush, tidied and swept the city-owned tennis courts, and began a clean-up and restoration of the tot playground, which was burned by vandals two years ago.

"It is important for our students to have school pride, and to take responsibility for maintaining the world around them," Lovell said. "We encourage them to help keep this a clean and attractive place for all to enjoy, and Arbor Day is another wonderful way for us to do that."



During the springtime, the Ashfield has two nature-friendly electives, Ashfield Beautification and Science & Nature. Through those electives, students learn about the earth, the ecosystem and the importance of preserving natural resources. Students are also helping to clean up the school and make it an attractive part of the surrounding neighborhood.



Seventh graders Aaric Rivera and Nick Risko were enthusiastic about the project, and were happy to lend a hand to beautify the

school complex. The two students helped spread mulch, outline flower beds and clean up brush in front of the building.

“We’re proud to be having this day at our school,” Nick said. “We wanted to help the world and the school.”

For Aaric, Arbor Day is a reminder to act locally and think globally.

“So many trees are getting cut down for timber, that it’s good we’re planting some new ones,” he said.

The Arbor Day Flag will be displayed prominently in the school for the next year, along with a Mayoral Proclamation designating the Ashfield Middle School as the site of the city’s event.

The Arbor Day Foundation is a nonprofit, conservation and education organization of more than one million members, with a mission to inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees. The first Arbor Day was held in Nebraska City, Neb. in 1872, through the efforts of J. Sterling Morton. More than one million trees were planted in Nebraska during the first Arbor Day.

More information on the Foundation and its programs can be found at www.arborday.org.



